Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT Grand School District January 2, 2008

The attached report contains the results of the first two phases (Self-Assessment Process and On-Site Validation Visit) of the Utah Special Education Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS). This Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process is conducted by the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) Special Education Services (SES), as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B. The process is designed to focus resources on improving results for students with disabilities through enhanced partnerships between charter school and district programs, USOE-SES, the Utah Personnel Development Center, parents, and advocates.

The first phase of this process included the development of a Program Improvement Plan. The second phase, On-Site Validation, conducted in Grand School District on October 23, 2007, included student record reviews and school site visits. Parent surveys were also mailed to a small sample of parents.

This report contains a more complete description of the process utilized to collect data and to determine strengths, areas out of compliance with the requirements of IDEA, and recommendations for improvement in each of the core IDEA areas.

Areas of Strength

The validation team found the following:

General Supervision

- A process of regular file monitoring was established in order to ensure compliance with district files.
- Grand School District's special education staff is viewed as professional, helpful, and concerned about their students, as described on various stakeholder surveys.
- Training of the UPIPs Steering Committee in the file review process facilitated a greater understanding of the special education cycle.
- The child find process works well at locating and identifying students in need of special education and related services.
- Many staff members are seeking further training in areas of high need such as ELL, severe, speech and language, etc.
- Grand School District is focusing on improving academic achievement for all students, with particular focus on the subgroups which struggle the most.
- One school has implemented a three tiered model for literacy and two other schools are researching for possible implementation of the model at their sites.
- All teachers are required to create a curriculum map, coordinate with grade/department teachers, establish essential benchmarks, and devise a plan for reteaching students who do not achieve benchmarks.
- Grand School District exceeded the state target for U-PASS participation.
- Special education teachers, when surveyed, responded that there was adequate district administrative support.
- Evaluations were complete and included multiple assessments that targeted the areas of concern for each student.
- Initial evaluation process included the use of a review of existing data by the team, prior to beginning evaluation.
- Classroom observations documented a positive classroom environment in which all students were actively engaged in learning.
- Schools were welcoming and personnel were helpful and enthusiastic about their school's programs.
- Special education staff expressed concern about student progress and using research-based instructional materials.
- Special education staff review student level data and search for innovative ideas to improve all student performance.
- Forms are in compliance and are present in all files as required.

- Special education teachers utilize curriculum mapping from the general education classrooms at the student grade level.
- The Helen M. Knight Intermediate School (HMK) has developed an innovative school-wide 3 tier
 model of classroom instruction that is data driven and tracks all student progress, allowing
 teachers to make instructional decisions based on student-performance multiple times throughout
 the school year. This process has resulted in a decrease in special education referrals.
- Every teacher at HMK has a special needs (special education, ELL, Title 1) staff member in each classroom for a minimum of 50 minutes per day to support reading instruction.
- Special education records are maintained in locked cabinets with posted Access Authorizations and include Records of Access in each file.
- Initial evaluations are completed within 60 days for students determined eligible and not eligible for special education and related services.
- Evaluation results are reported to parents through graphic representation, clarifying data.
- Special education teachers at HMK utilize Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) progress monitoring data, along with CRT scores, to track student progress.
- CRT scores show an improvement in the proficiency rates of students with disabilities in math and language arts in the past two years.

Parent Involvement

- The results of all the surveys that were conducted by the UPIPs steering committee were generally positive. All interviewed stakeholders expressed the strong need for parental involvement at every level.
- The parent representative on the UPIPS steering committee was actively involved in coordinating the parent survey.
- Parent letters of commendation regarding the 3 tier program were available at Helen M. Knight Intermediate School.
- Parents receive progress reports frequently. At HMK, they receive progress reports every 4-5 weeks.
- Parents receive Procedural Safeguards at least annually, as documented by their signatures in special education files.
- Notices of Meetings were complete and included in special education files.
- Some school staff provide parent instruction in reading strategies at student homes.
- Parent volunteers are utilized to conduct informal assessments and provide additional support in classrooms.
- Special education files contained documentation of parent input during the evaluation and eligibility determination process.
- Consent from parents is documented prior to evaluation and placement in special education.
- Parents (and students age 18+) receive prior written notice of proposed actions, including change of placement due to graduation) in a timely manner.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- IEPs are developed with the team working together to develop goals that allow the student to access the general curriculum to the maximum extent appropriate.
- Goalview allows teams to view and consider the USOE core standards and objectives while writing IEP goals.
- Students with disabilities are encouraged to participate to the maximum extent appropriate in after-school clubs and activities in the same manner as their non disabled peers.
- IEPs contained specific special education services for school-aged students.
- Special education files are well organized and complete.
- IEPs addressed special factors, related services, supplementary aids and services, and extended school year (ESY) decisions.
- There is documented decision making based upon CRT results and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS).
- Students with disabilities are included in the general education environment as appropriate.
- Paraeducator support for students with disabilities is evident during classroom observations.
- Special education classrooms contained many instructional resources.
- Some students receive life skills instruction, as indicated on their IEPs.

- Placement decisions are determined by a full IEP team and documented.
- IEP goals address all areas of student needs, as determined by the contents of the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) statement.

Transitions

- Age 3-5 programs are being provided through the district preschool program.
- The Sundwall preschool staff actively coordinates with the Early Intervention and Headstart programs.
- Grand High School special education staff provides job coaching for students.
- All applicable IEPs were implemented by age 3.
- IEPs were developed and implemented by the student's 3rd birthday, when appropriate.
- Preschool special education files included the UPOD form.
- Students graduating or reaching maximum age receive a Summary of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance.
- Students receive notice of change of placement at least 45 days before graduation or reaching maximum age.
- The high school has a certified job coach on staff, who has contacts with local businesses.
- Grand School District collaborates with Workforce Services to provide job placements for some students with disabilities.

Disproportionality

- When compared to the overall student population of Grand district and state average data, students with disabilities in Grand district are classified following federal, state, and district policy. This results in average numbers of classification by disability categories, gender, and ethnicity.
- Special education files contained documentation of the student's primary home language.

Areas of Systemic Noncompliance*

• IEPs do not contain measurable goals.

*These areas represent items where the visiting team could not locate appropriate documentation of requirements of IDEA 2004 and Utah State Special Education Rules in student records or other data sources.